

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-36 and 38-51 are currently pending, Claims 1, 15, 29, 32, 40, and 43 having been amended. The changes and additions to the claims do not add new matter and are supported by the originally filed specification, for example, on page 16, lines 19-25 and page 17, lines 1-4.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-8, 10-11, 14-22, 24-25, 28-36, 39-48, and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Makitni (JP 10-190930) in view of Hewett et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0104023, hereafter “Hewett”); and Claims 9, 12-13, 23, 26-27, 38, and 49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Makitni in view of Hewett and Ginter et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2006/0224903, hereafter “Ginter”).

With respect to the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to Claim 1 overcomes this ground of rejection.

Amended Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*,

a user information input part for a user to input user information and user authentication information;

an external server communication part, which sends the inputted user information to an external server through the internet and receives pre-registered user authentication information from the external server through the internet;

one or more authentication parts, which authenticate the user authentication information by comparing the received pre-registered user authentication information with the authentication information inputted by the user.

Applicants respectfully submit that Makitni and Hewett fail to disclose or suggest at least these features of amended Claim 1.

Makitni describes a method of managing user ID numbers for a copy machine. Figure 1 of Makitni shows copy machine 107 on a Local Area Network (LAN). Makitni describes that copy machine 107 has a liquid crystal touch panel which interacts with control unit 221 (see para. [0014]). A user can register an ID number from control unit 221 (see para. [0030]). After the user registers the ID number, the registered ID number is notified to management equipment 222 through interface 214 (see para. [0041]). A user can also register a network user ID from the control unit (see para. [0043]). The network user ID is saved on a non-volatile memory in copy machine 107 (see para. [0048]). When a user later inputs an ID number to the control unit, the copy machine transmits the inputted ID number to management equipment 222 through an interface 214 (see para. [0052]). Management equipment 222 judges whether there is a match between the ID number inputted to a registered ID number, and if there is a match then the copy machine is enabled to be activated (see para. [0053]). If a network ID is inputted to copy machine 107 then copy machine 107 searches a table to match the inputted network ID to an ID number suitable to transmit to management equipment 222. As discussed above, management equipment 222 will enable the copy machine if the inputted ID number matches a registered ID number (see para. [0060] – [0065]).

The Office Action takes the position that where Makitni describes a user inputting an ID number corresponds to the claimed “a user information input part for a user to input user information and user authentication information.” (See Office Action, at page 2, citing para. [0007] of Makitni). However, Makitni only describes that an ID number is inputted, but does not describe a user inputting both user information and user authentication information.

Furthermore, the Office Action takes the position that Makitni describes receiving pre-registered authentication information from an external server (see Office Action, at page 3, citing para. [0006], [0007], and [0041]). The Office Action appears to interpret the

management equipment 222 as corresponding to the claimed “external server.” However, the cited portion of Makitni describes the management equipment “attesting” to the inputted user ID number and permitting a copy operation. In other words, in Makitni, the ***management equipment*** (as the external server) performs a comparison of an inputted user ID number and a registered user ID number and permits copying on the copy machine. However, Makitni does not describe ***the copy machine*** (as the image forming apparatus) performing a comparison between pre-registered authentication information received from the management equipment and comparing it with authentication information inputted from the user, where the authentication information is separate from the user ID.

Therefore, Makitni fails to disclose or suggest “a user information input part for a user to input user information and user authentication information,” “an external server communication part, which sends the inputted user information to an external server through the internet and receives pre-registered user authentication information from the external server through the internet,” and “one or more authentication parts, which authenticate the user authentication information by comparing the received pre-registered user authentication information with the authentication information inputted by the user,” as defined by amended Claim 1.

The Office Action also acknowledges that Makitni fails to disclose or suggest an external server storing pre-registered user authentication information independently at a separate location on the internet (see Office Action, at page 3). The Office Action relies on Hewett to remedy the deficiencies of Makitni with regard to Claim 1.

Hewett is directed to a method of using dynamic web components to remotely control the security state of web pages. Fig. 2 of Hewett shows a system which includes remote server 205 and local clients 210, 215, and 220. Remote server 205 has a web component 200, which defines the security state of a web page and defines what information will be displayed

on the local clients (see para. [0048]). The web component 200 is used to control whether the displayed web page within a window of a web browser will be secure or non-secure based on function properties that the local clients pass on to the web component (see para. [0056]).

The Office Action takes the position that the remote server 205 which includes the web component 200 of Hewett corresponds to the claimed external server storing “pre-registered user authentication information independently from the apparatus at a separate location on the internet.” However, Hewett does not describe that the local client (presumably as the image forming apparatus) receives both user information and user authentication from a user, sends the user information to the remote server (as the external server), receives pre-registered user authentication from the remote server, and then compares the pre-registered user authentication to user authentication inputted from the user.

Therefore, Applicants submit that Hewett fails to disclose or suggest “a user information input part for a user to input user information and user authentication information,” “an external server communication part, which sends the inputted user information to an external server through the internet and receives pre-registered user authentication information from the external server through the internet,” and “one or more authentication parts, which authenticate the user authentication information by comparing the received pre-registered user authentication information with the authentication information inputted by the user,” as defined by amended Claim 1.

Therefore, Hewett fails to remedy the deficiencies of Makitni with regard to amended Claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably distinguishes over Makitni and Hewett, either alone or in proper combination.

Ginter has been considered but fails to remedy the deficiencies of Makitni and Hewett as discussed above with regard to Claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that

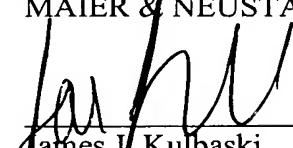
amended Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably distinguishes over Makitni, Hewett, and Ginter, either alone or in proper combination.

Applicants further submit that amended independent Claims 15, 29, 32, 40, and 43 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably distinguish over Makitni, Hewett, and Ginter, either alone or in proper combination, for similar reasons as discussed above with regard to amended Claim 1.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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